REMARKS

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the objections and rejections set forth in the above-mentioned Official Action in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks are respectfully requested.

Claims 1 and 3-14 are now pending in the application, with Claims 1, 6-8 and 10-14 being independent. Claim 2 has been cancelled without prejudice. Claims 1 and 3-14 have been amended herein.

The drawings were objected to for minor informalities. It was suggested that certain reference numerals were used to designate more than one part, certain reference numerals were shown in the drawings but not mentioned in the specification, and certain reference numerals were mentioned in the specification but not included in the drawings. Applicants are submitting herewith a corrected drawing sheet of Figure 3 in response to these objections. In particular, the second occurrence of "101" in Figure 3 has been changed to --110--, and reference numeral "311" designating the right-side tray has been deleted. Further, reference numerals "7", "19", "20", "22", "23", "420", "421", and "1000" have been deleted. As to reference numerals "407", "408" and "411", they are discussed at page 10, lines 13-16, of the original specification. In addition, the specification has been amended at page 6, line 12 to clarify that reference numeral "410" refers to the rollers in Figure 3, and has been amended at page 10, line 7 to reference printer section 51. Favorable consideration and withdrawal of the objections to the drawings are requested.

Claims 8-14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,957,450 (Kida et al.). Claims 1-7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being

unpatentable over Kida et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,587,799 (Kawamura et al.). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Each of independent Claims 1, 6, and 7 recites, inter alia, determining whether a no-operation state by an operator continues for a predetermined time, automatically shifting to a predetermined operation mode based on such determination, and controlling the sheet processing apparatus so as to store a sheet in a sheet storage unit corresponding to the predetermined operation mode. With such features, after an operation mode is automatically shifted to a predetermined operation mode, the apparatus can start image forming processing when a job for the predetermined operation mode is inputted, because the corresponding sheet storage unit has been selected.

Kida et al. describes a sheet discharging apparatus having plural trays for receiving sheets from an image forming apparatus. As understood by Applicants, in Kida et al. sheet storage units can be assigned for each of a copy mode, a facsimile mode, and a printer mode. However, the switching among the modes is made by manual operation by a user manipulating copy/fax/printer mode switching key 26. Further, Applicants submit that Kida et al. is silent regarding automatically shifting to a predetermined operation mode when a no-operation state by an operator continues for a predetermined time. Moreover, the timing of switching among the sheet storage units in Kida et al. is made when a printed sheet is fed, rather than in response to shifting to an operation mode.

Thus, Kida et al. fails to disclose or suggest important features of the present invention recited in independent Claims 1, 6, and 7.

Kawamura et al. relates to a copying machine with reserved copying at a predetermined time period. As understood by Applicants, in Kawamura et al., if no operation for setting recording density or sheet size is inputted for a predetermined time, the mode for setting recording density or sheet size is cancelled. Kawamura et al. fails to disclose or suggest switching among operation modes such as a copy mode, image communication mode, or a printer mode. Even if Kida et al. were modified by the teachings of Kawamura et al., the resulting combination would merely teach cancelling a state for setting a parameter for each operation mode if the parameter is not inputted for a predetermined time. Kawamura et al. is not believed to remedy the deficiencies of Kida et al. noted above with respect to independent Claims 1, 6, and 7.

Thus, independent Claims 1, 6, and 7 are believed to be patentable over the citations of record.

Each of independent Claims 8, 11, 12 recites, inter alia, automatically shifting an operation mode of a final image formation job to a specific operation mode before a new job is input. Applicants respectfully submit that in Kida et al., the switching among operation modes, such as facsimile or printer modes, is made after a new job is input. Further, the switching among sheet storage units is made for the first time when the recorded sheet is fed. Accordingly, Kida et al. also cannot disclose or suggest controlling a sheet processing apparatus so as to store a sheet in a sheet storage unit corresponding to the specific operation mode, in response to the shift of the operation mode before the new job is input, as is also recited in independent Claims 8, 11, and 12. Kawamura et al. is not believed to remedy these deficiencies.

Accordingly, independent Claims 8, 11 and 12 are also patentable over the citations of record.

Independent Claims 10, 13, and 14 each recites, inter alia, displaying display windows corresponding to operation modes on a display device independently for respective operation modes and controlling a sheet storage unit, corresponding to the operation mode of a window to be displayed, so as to store a sheet.

As discussed above, in Kida et al. the switching among operation modes is made in response to the operation of key 26. However, the switching among sheet storage units is made for the first time when the recorded sheet is fed out. Accordingly, Kida et al. cannot disclose or suggest that when a display window corresponding to any one of a plurality of operation modes is to be displayed on a display device, a sheet storage unit, corresponding to the operation mode of the window to be displayed, is controlled so as to store a sheet. Kawamura et al. is not believed to remedy this deficiency.

Accordingly, independent Claims 10, 13, and 14 are also patentable over the citations of record.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the §§ 102 and 103 rejections are respectfully requested.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that the present invention is patentably defined by independent Claims 1, 6-8 and 10-14. Dependent Claims 3-5 and 9 are also allowable, in their own right, for defining features of the present invention in addition to those recited in their respective independent claims. Individual consideration of the dependent claims is requested.

Applicant submits that the present application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration, withdrawal of the objections and rejections set forth in the above-noted Office Action, and an early Notice of Allowability are requested.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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